

## Rationale for PRACTICE Portfolio #2

**Title:** *Youth Social What Training?*

**Grade:** 12

**Year Released:** 2007

### Reflective Piece: Letter to the Reviewer

3 Content (3, 3, 2)

Though the writing would perhaps seem more authentic as a personal essay without "Dear Reviewer" format, this letter establishes and maintains an authentic focused purpose on a reasoned comparison/connection between the author's writing and the literacy experience of a routine viewing and analysis of *Saturday Night Live*. The audience's needs are considered by offering explanation of cast member roles for those who may be unfamiliar with the show and engaged by including information ("From Studio 8H") for those who are viewers. Although sufficient details are present regarding the writer's development (e.g., "I knew that transactive writing was my weakness,"; "I improved grammatical structure..."), the ideas are unelaborated. Many of the details are irrelevant to the purpose of reflecting on literacy goals, with more of a focus on *SNL*.

3 Structure (3, 3, 4)

The writer employs logical organization, beginning with "*Live from New York, it's Saturday Night!*" and progressing through the "rehearsal" of his writing to the "live" performance, the portfolio. Each paragraph is focused on a particular element of the show that the writer attempts to connect to his or her writing experience. Effective transitional elements are included throughout (e.g., "But even great things can have terrible moments..."; "Despite positive thinking when receiving hard work in life..."). Sentence structure is correct and varied with the inclusion of complex and simple sentences as well as rhetorical questions (e.g., "Why is this so?") to enhance meaning.

3 Conventions (3, 3, 4)

Control of grammar and usage is demonstrated throughout (e.g., consistent verb tense, subject verb agreement, parallel structure). Word choice is acceptable and appropriate for the purpose of comparison and intended audience (e.g., "...I've become somewhat entranced with the whole process," "milk-out-of-your-nose hysterical" "...a sensation of sympathy and understanding mixed in with a dash of irony"). The piece demonstrates few errors in correctness and incorporates skillful use of punctuation including dashes and italics.

### Instructional Implications:

Lessons that may derive from the use of this sample include

- the demonstration of how this piece may be more appropriate as a personal essay rather than a letter to the reviewer. Teachers may discuss how forcing an audience (e.g., "Dear Reviewer") may contribute to misunderstanding.

## Personal OR Literary Piece: "Youth Social *What* Training?"

### 3 Content (3, 4, 3)

The writer's purpose is focused on relating one experience—the story of her attendance at a Youth Social Justice Training event. Early on in the narrative, the training workshop is described and the experience the author will soon have is foreshadowed by italicizing "all" in the third paragraph numerous times. The writer also includes the disclaimer, "-if you look at the text on the official website." The writer's voice is strong and pervasive (e.g., "*In West Philadelphia, born and raised...*"; "...were smoking cigarette after cigarette, while discussing cigarettes."; "...I wasn't in Kansas anymore."; "...for THREE HOURS. I barely survived Lord of the Rings, which I absolutely loved"). This indicates a strong awareness of audience and an informal, yet distinctive voice. Ample detail is present demonstrating a depth of idea development; however, some details seem unnecessary (e.g., nose ring).

### 4 Structure (3, 4, 4)

The overall organizational structure is logical, presented in a chronological order, but does not necessarily enhance the purpose. Transitional elements are varied and effective to guide the reader from paragraph to paragraph (e.g., "Throughout the training..." "Lunchtime finally came..." "After the 'heavy talk' was over..."). Although some awkward sentence structures are included (e.g., "As a person who, until about a year from then, had no religious education..."), the number of purposeful, complex sentences far outweighs them, demonstrating variety and control. The use of rhetorical questions is employed effectively (e.g., "Let's talk about the environment... how many trees were torn down to provide us with these huge packets?") to communicate the author's tone to the intended audience.

### 3 Conventions (3, 3, 4)

Some skillful use of grammar is demonstrated such as the use of dashes, ellipses, and discussion of "gender pronouns." Control of grammar/usage is apparent throughout. The writing demonstrates appropriate and acceptable word choice for the intended audience and purpose. Few errors in correctness are evident. The purposeful use of sentence fragments (e.g., "And another couple of hours at another bus stop. And another couple of hours at yet another bus stop.") serves to illustrate the author's tone.

## Instructional Implications:

Lessons that may derive from the use of this sample include

- the demonstration of distinctive voice in writing.
- the demonstration of depth of idea development.

## **Transactional Piece:** "Ionic, Covalent, or Metallic?: Differentiating Between Chemical Bonds"

### 2 Content (2, 2, 2)

Although a lab write-up is an effective tool for writing to demonstrate learning in the classroom, it fails to achieve an authentic purpose for publication without some particular approach, some set-up, and some justification for the need for the information presented. The writer of this piece attempts to establish a purpose, but writes, "...my task was to discover how each type of compound was bonded," and in the conclusion, explains, "This experiment allowed me to expand my knowledge..." These statements indicate some awareness of some audience, but that awareness does not move beyond the classroom teacher. Although ideas/procedures are elaborated, they are not relevant to an authentic purpose.

### 3 Structure (3, 3, 3)

The organization of the piece is logical with the inclusion of an introduction, procedure, conclusion and works cited section. No lapses are apparent and effective transitional elements such as headings and subheadings are used. When charts are depicted, they are accompanied by a reasoned explanation of their contents. Logical progression is obvious and each section is focused on one main idea. The writer demonstrates control of sentence structure, effectively varying simple and complex sentences.

### 3 Conventions (3, 4, 3)

Control of grammar and usage is demonstrated throughout the writing (e.g., clear pronoun antecedents, subject-verb agreement). Word choice is precise, technical, and appropriate for the audience. The piece demonstrates few errors in correctness and includes a consistent style of documentation of source materials.

## **Instructional Implications:**

Lessons that may derive from the use of this sample include

- the demonstration of the need for authentic purpose and ownership in writing, specifically related to scientific lab reports.
- the discussion of writing intended to demonstrate learning vs. writing intended for publication.

**Transactional with analytical/technical focus:** "To CRON or not to CRON: Calorie Restriction Society"

3 Content (3, 3, 3)

The title, "To CRON or not to CRON..." suggests that the author will present an argument to persuade readers of the harm or benefits of the lifestyle; however, the focus of the piece is more informational than persuasive. The author communicates adequately with the audience, but relies heavily on animal studies, possibly a signal of lesser awareness of audience needs. Idea development is sufficient, particularly in the provision of detail of studies.

2 Structure (2, 2, 3)

Although the piece is generally organized, moving in chronological progression of study results (e.g., "In the early 1900s..."; "Several years later..."; "In 1988..."; "In another study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in 2004..."), some lapses occur (e.g., "The leap from mice to humans..."). Some effective transitions are demonstrated such as the use the rhetorical question to signal the shift from discussion of benefits in the first half of the piece to the drawbacks in the second half. Control of sentence structure is evident throughout.

3 Conventions (3, 3, 3)

The writer demonstrates a control of grammar and usage. Although the word "longevity" is used repeatedly, overall the word choice is acceptable and appropriate for the intended audience. Parenthetical documentation is correct and is accompanied by a works cited page using an appropriate style.

**Instructional Implications:**

Lessons that may derive from the use of this sample include

- the discussion of informational writing vs. persuasive writing.
- the demonstration of appropriate documentation.